

**MINUTES OF THE NORTHWEST PROGRESSO – FLAGLER HEIGHTS
REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD
FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
JUNE 25, 2008 – 3:30 P.M.**

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	Cumulative Attendance May 2008 - April 2009	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Ella Phillips, Chair	P	1	0
Michael Ferber, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Phyllis Berry (arrived 3:35pm)	P	1	0
James Brady	P	1	0
Jerry Carter	A	0	1
Ron Centamore	P	1	0
Mickey Hinton	P	1	0
Bradley Hubert	P	1	0
Brice Lambrix	P	1	0
Laura Mutti	P	1	0
Doug Sterner	P	1	0
Claire Vickery	P	1	0
Alan Gabriel	P	1	0
Jerry Heniser (3:41 p.m.)	P	1	0
Samuel Williams	P	1	0

Staff

Alfred Battle, CRA Director
Thomasina Turner-Diggs, CRA Staff, Project Coordinator
Hilda Testa, Recording Clerk, Prototype, Inc.

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m. by Chair Phillips. Roll call was taken, and it was determined a quorum was present.

II. Approval of April 23, 2008 Minutes

Brad Hubert noted on Page 10, the second paragraph, "... and NW 22nd Avenue had been approved for purchase by the CRA Board at \$500,000," should be changed to "... was presented to the CRA Board ...", and ... there had been a \$400,000 offer made to the seller" should be changed to "... was a \$400,000 counter offer made to the seller" for clarity.

Motion made by Mr. Gabriel, seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve the minutes of the April 23, 2008 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

III. NPF CRA Project Status Report

Mr. Battle explained to the Board that the City was in the process of putting together the budget to be presented to the City Commission in July. Mr. Battle stated there was some uncertainty in terms of referendums and tax revenues. He also stated there had been significant impact to tax revenues due mostly to the decrease in taxable properties.

Mr. Battle stated since there was not a lot of home ownership in the Northwest CRA area in general, with the creation of new home ownerships in the area, it would be interesting to see how the area would be impacted over the next three to five years. Mr. Battle credited the Board for the tax increment revenue growth in the area.

Chair Phillips noted the arrival of Mr. Heniser at 3:41 p.m.

Mr. Battle gave a presentation and handouts to the Board members. He reminded the Board the boundaries were defined by City resolution, with Sunrise to the north, the City limits, NW 27th Avenue on the west, and Broward Boulevard on the south, and by Andrews and Federal Highway to the east. Mr. Battle pointed out the very diverse area and population within the boundaries.

Mr. Battle detailed the following key project areas and opportunities:

- Sweeting Estates
- Midtown Business District
- Dorsey Riverbend
- Flagler Heights

Mr. Battle advised a lot of work had been done in Sweeting Estates, and referred to the area as "one of our neighborhoods that's almost to the point of turning around and being very much complete from a redevelopment standpoint." Mr. Battle cautioned that, at the same time, there was a lot more work to be done. Mr. Battle stated that, in addition to the three houses already built, there were a number of new development opportunities.

Mr. Battle pointed out the CDC town home project, which had recently received Board of Adjustment approval to allow them to move their setback closer to the road. He also noted a property which had recently been approved to build eleven single family homes

in the Sweeting Estate area. Due to the current housing market, the homes would not all be built at the same time, but an amended plan would allow for three affordable housing units to be built, with the other eight properties being held until finalized contracts with financing were available for the other eight market-rate properties.

Mr. Battle noted there were other opportunities for clean up in the Sweeting area, including the rooming houses at the corner of NW 22nd Avenue and Sistrunk Boulevard. An offer had been made to the City Commission to purchase the rooming houses for \$500,000. The properties are in a state of disrepair, and the structure had been declared unsafe by Code Enforcement. Due to the state of disrepair, a counter offer was made to the seller, and the properties were purchased for \$400,000.

In response to questions by a Board member, Mr. Battle explained the property was deemed to be unsafe due to illegal conversion from an approximately 2,500 square foot single family structure to an apartment building, which had been operating for over 25 years. Mr. Battle confirmed the structure, although deemed unsafe, still had value.

Mr. Battle stated there was a contract with the seller of the "Green Store" property, with contract delivery pending.

Mr. Battle summarized the following future opportunities for Sweeting Estates:

- Neighborhood participating in the NCIP program, with monuments to be built soon
- Sistrunk Roadway improvements.
- Betty's Restaurant renovations
- Disposal of the rooming house and Green Store properties

Mr. Battle mentioned the following Midtown Business District projects:

- Sixth Street Plaza
- BAC Façade Project
- Sheryl Dickey Building
- MODCO Project
- RFP Status for CRA-Owned Properties

Mr. Battle reminded the Board the Sixth Street Plaza would be the new location for the CRA offices. Mr. Battle provided an update, including photographs, and stated the project was at about 95% completion, with anticipated completion in July. Mr. Battle stated two buildings were being renovated, and one being built.

The project included dealing with many contractors, and problems finding a lender to commit to the project. Mr. Battle stated some funding had been provided by the South Florida Regional Planning Council. Due to increases, change orders, and turnover in subcontractors, the project was currently at about \$2.7 million. Regents Bank extended the loan by \$300,000, with the CRA providing additional funds.

Mr. Battle stated the new building would be about 12,000 square feet, the renovated building would be about 8,000 square feet, and the smaller building was about 2,000 square feet. Mr. Battle requested the Board take a tour of the new development.

In response to questions from Board members, Mr. Battle explained the lease would pay the debt service.

Mr. Battle provided photographs of the businesses agreeing to participate in changing the building facades. Mr. Battle explained right-of-way permits were required for any change to the facades, which caused problems.

Mr. Battle also informed the Board the CRA had been unaware that any business receiving a façade grant from the City became the property of the City. Mr. Battle noted neighborhood's relationship with the City had been strained due to property issues in the past, which made the local businesses apprehensive regarding agreements with the City. There had also been issues with contractors participating in the relatively small projects.

Mr. Battle provided photographs to the Board depicting "before and after" façade projects.

Mr. Battle provided a brief history of the Sheryl Dickey Building project, and noted the project had been amended on May 20, 2008. A new lender, the South Florida Regional Planning Council, has committed to the project and a new schedule was being developed.

Mr. Battle described status for the RFPs:

- Midtown Oasis - in DRC for final review and approval
- Westside Gazette - project is struggling, and had been granted a six month extension. CRA currently working with the developer to resolve issues
- Sistrunk Lofts - six month extension granted which will expire in July, 2008. Developer requested a bigger project bringing in the Longshoremen

Mr. Battle advised the Board developers had expressed interest in additional projects in the area, including a parking facility, the car wash, and other larger sites. These projects would begin to be brought to the Board in July.

Mr. Battle stated the Dorsey Riverbend model home project had been a "rousing success". DeAngelo Development Group built thirteen homes, with one remaining left to be sold. Mr. Battle provided photographs of the new homes and the neighborhood.

Mr. Battle provided an update on the Dixie Court project discussed in the April Board meeting. Mr. Battle commended the developer of Tangle Village, just north of the police department, and Sable Town Homes to the east for their significant improvements to the neighborhood. Mr. Battle noted future improvements being developed including roundabouts, entryway features, and other capital improvements projects funded through a State grant. These projects would begin the end of 2008.

Utilizing photographs, Mr. Battle described significant current and future improvements in the Flagler Heights area including:

- Avenue Lofts
- Bamboo Flats
- Flagler on Fifth Lofts
- The Heights at Flagler Village
- Pinnacle Housing site demolished
- Eclipse
- Courtyards at Flagler Village
- Minto Development Site
- Flagler Village Streetscape Grant

Mr. Battle described the Eclipse project, and reminded the Board had provided a park impact fee waiver grant for \$183,000. The project would be out of DRC in June, and ground breaking should happen in July.

In response to questions by Board members, Mr. Battle admitted rental of the lofts had been slow, and rental incentives had been utilized to rent the units. Tangle Village town homes had all been rented. Mr. Battle expected the developers to return to the Board for streetscape approvals to enhance the area.

Mr. Centamore described a new retail project on 8th and Federal. Mr. Battle assured the retail project would be coming before the Board.

Mr. Battle described a streetscape request package being prepared for the Sistrunk area to create an "urban village". The request would include on-street parking, streetlights, landscaping, and roundabouts. The package would request approximately \$2.7 to \$3 million in CRA funds out of a total of \$5 million needed.

Mr. Battle stated the NW CRA implementation plan had been approved, and planning and zoning issues were in the process of being revised, with design guidelines and general zoning to follow. Mr. Battle advised the Sistrunk design should be finished and ready to submit to the City Commission in July. There followed a brief discussion by the Board members regarding suggestions for aesthetic improvements. Mr. Battle noted Broward Transit had been very helpful in eliminating redundant bus stops.

Mr. Battle announced a developer had been located for the five acre NW commercial redevelopment plan. The site was purchased with Community Development block grant funds, requiring an amendment to the HUD Action Plan before development could begin. The public hearing necessary to begin the process would happen in September 2008. Mr. Battle explained a grocery store had always been the main tenant, and a requirement would be made for a 25,000 square foot grocery store. There is a recruitment process in place to identify possible grocers to fill the space. Mr. Battle estimated eight months to identify the grocer once the HUD plan was amended.

Mr. Battle announced the Konover Corporate Park has the first building completed on schedule, and the project was going "great guns".

Mr. Battle provided slides and photographs to update the Board on the Progresso Area improvements. The CRA has agreed to put forward some money for street closures, landscaping, up lighting, and irrigation in the area.

Mr. Battle stated the Eula Johnson House had been acquired by the CRA to be used as a redevelopment site. As the house has historical significance, the NAACP, the Midtown Business District, and the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society had asked the City Commission to participate in the preservation of the house. The CRA was required to put out a 30-day notice to occupy the house for office space and a Civil Rights and desegregation museum. Mr. Battle felt sure the CRA would be asked to participate in the renovation of the house, and to provide a lease of approximately \$7.00 per square foot.

Mr. Battle stated retail businesses were struggling along Sistrunk, and felt the CRA needed to be more proactive in providing small business incentives to improve sustainability for area businesses.

The Board held a discussion concerning the parking problems related to having a restaurant in the area, and improving foot traffic. It was suggested a "re-visioning" effort be undertaken by area business owners. Mr. Battle stated the City could be part of the solution by assisting with parking on City-owned properties. Mr. Battle agreed to send the HDR report regarding City and CRA properties' redevelopment opportunities to the Board members.

Mr. Battle provided the following suggestions to advance efforts in the area:

- Small business incentives
- More housing
- Recruitment and marketing efforts
- Enterprise zone and economic development efforts

Mr. Battle noted the current market presented an opportunity for the CRA to purchase properties. The CRA would provide a list of suggested purchases to the Board at a later meeting. Mr. Hubert asked if developers could be encouraged to purchase the properties, with the City offering incentives, rather than the purchases being undertaken by the City. Mr. Battle agreed to look at some options for providing incentives to developers once the properties were identified.

(Mr. Hubert left the meeting at 4:55 p.m.)

Mr. Battle discussed the significant growth seen by the CRA since 1995, including:

- Taxable value growth from \$211 million to \$896 million
- Tax increment revenue from \$1 million to approximately \$6.2 million

Ms. Mutti requested information on the location of Sable Town Homes. Mr. Battle stated the development was at the corner of NW Second Street and 12th Avenue. Mr. Battle noted the project name had been confirmed with the Planning Department, but no developer contact information was available. Construction was currently underway in the area, and the CRA was still trying to get developer and owner information.

(Ms. Mutti left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.)

Chair Phillips admitted earlier concerns with the area, but felt encouraged by the work, progress, and commitment displayed by the Board, Mr. Battle, and the Staff.

Mr. Ferber concurred, and also expressed thanks to Mr. Battle and the Staff, specifically for the work done on the corner of Andrews and Sistrunk. Mr. Ferber requested Mr.

Battle keep the Board updated on the Pinnacle development project in the upcoming months. Mr. Battle stated the developer may return to the Board next month, as there was a less than 50% chance of receiving funding. Mr. Brady stated on a "go forward basis" the site needed to be grassed by the developer (with possible subsidized funds) to eliminate the demolition rubble.

Ms. Vickery noted the amazing work done in the Little Haiti commercial district on 79th Street and Biscayne in North Miami over the last two years. Ms. Vickery agreed to obtain information on the district and their work with branding to create retail interest for a future meeting.

IV. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. Bierbaum, Prototype, Inc.]